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Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction

Programme budget implications of draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/73/10 and A/C.5/73/10/Corr.1) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1 on convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. During its consideration of the statement, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 7 December 2018.

2. Under the terms of paragraphs (a), (c), (d) and (e) of draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, the General Assembly would decide, inter alia:

(a) To entrust to the Secretary-General the convening, no later than 2019 for a duration of one week at United Nations Headquarters, of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, to which all States of the Middle East, the three co-sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in the light of their responsibility for the implementation of that resolution, the other two nuclear-weapon States and the relevant international organizations shall be invited;

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(b) To request the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit to prepare the background documents necessary for the conference;

(c) To request the Secretary-General to convene annual sessions of the conference for a duration of one week at United Nations Headquarters until the conference concludes the elaboration of a legally binding treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction;

(d) To also request the Secretary-General to report annually to the General Assembly on developments in this regard.

3. The statement of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/73/10 and A/C.5/73/10/Corr.1) provides further information on: (a) activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented, starting in 2019 (ibid., paras. 4–8); (b) modifications required in the programme of work and under section 4, Disarmament, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (ibid., para. 9, including an amendment to table 4.16 of subprogramme 2: Weapons of mass destruction); and (c) the financial implications of the proposals in the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (ibid., paras. 10 and 11).

II. Resource requirements

4. The implementation of the proposed requests would entail additional annual resource requirements of $1,013,200 starting in 2019 for the implementation of the following activities:

(a) Convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction at United Nations Headquarters in New York, on an annual basis, starting in 2019, until it concludes the elaboration of a legally binding treaty, with each annual session entailing requirements of $508,400 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, comprising: (i) meeting services for a total of 10 meetings (5 days) with interpretation in all six languages ($84,000); and (ii) documentation services entailing additional requirements of ($424,400), comprising 12 pre-session documents with a total of 105,800 words ($322,700), 4 in-session documents with a total of 22,400 words ($69,200), and 1 post-session document with a total of 10,700 words ($32,500), to be issued in all six languages;

(b) Establishment of three general temporary assistance positions in the Office of Disarmament Affairs to provide an appropriate level of organizational and substantive support and servicing, including one position of Chief of Service (D-1) for 12 months, one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) for 12 months and one Documentation Assistant (General Service (Other level)) for 3 months, entailing additional annual requirements in the amount of $413,100 under section 4, Disarmament, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, starting in 2019;

(c) Production of meeting summaries in English and French for 10 meetings or 5 full days ($20,400), and production and maintenance of a dedicated conference website in all six languages ($19,700) by the Department of Public Information, entailing total additional annual requirements in the amount of $40,100 under section 28, Public Information, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019;

(d) Requirements of $51,600 for staff assessment.

5. The Advisory Committee requested further information on the reasons for requesting the position of Chief of Service (D-1) and Political Affairs Officer (P-3) for 12 months rather than on a part-time basis, as is the case for the General Service position. The Committee was informed that, unlike the requested General Service position, the work of the incumbents of both of the other positions (D-1 and P-3) would be focused on the substantive preparation of the conference, with technical servicing of the conference representing only a small part of their duties. In particular, the incumbent of the Chief of Service (D-1) position would assist and advise the President-designate of the conference in the consultations on a draft agenda, a draft programme of work and draft rules of procedure and modalities with regard to the conference, and also assist and advise the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Secretary-General on matters related to the conference. Furthermore, it is expected that following the conclusion of the annual conference, the incumbents of the requested positions would begin to make preparations for the following year's conference, as well as to draft the report requested in paragraph (e) of the draft decision (A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1; see also para. 2 (d) above).

6. With regard to the estimated requirements for the proposed position for one Documentation Assistant (General Service (Other level)), the Advisory Committee was informed that, for budgeting purposes, the same standard costs are used for all positions within the General Service (Other level) category, irrespective of the level. The Committee intends to revert to this matter in the context of its consideration of the proposed programme budget for 2020.

7. The Secretary-General indicates that no provisions have been made in the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 for the implementation of the activities requested in paragraphs (a), (c), (d) and (e) of the draft decision, and that it is necessary that the additional resource requirements in the amount of $1,013,200 be provided through an additional appropriation for the biennium 2018–2019. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 30 November 2018, expenditures incurred under section 4, Disarmament, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 totalled $11,537,300, representing 47.4 per cent of the total appropriation for 2018–2019.

8. The Secretary-General further indicates that the annual additional requirements in the amount of $1,013,200 in support of conferences in 2020 and beyond would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budgets for the appropriate periods.

III. Conclusion

9. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft decision A/C.1/73/L.22/Rev.1, additional resource requirements for 2019 in the amount of $1,013,200 would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, including: $508,400 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; $413,100 under section 4, Disarmament; and $40,100 under section 28, Public information; as well as an additional amount of $51,600 under section 36, Staff assessment; to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. The amount of $1,013,200 would require an additional appropriation for the biennium 2018–2019 to be approved by the Assembly and, as such, would represent a charge against the contingency fund.**